

THE VICTORIAN ALLIANCE OF SAN FRANCISCO

# THE STORIED HOUSES OF Alamo Square 2015 HOUSE TOUR



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# Table of Contents

<i>About the Victorian Alliance</i>	1
<i>Welcome from The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco</i>	3
<i>Alamo Square Neighborhood History</i>	4
<i>1198 Fulton Street</i>	6
<i>1027 Hayes Street</i>	7
<i>601 Steiner Street</i>	8
<i>710 Steiner Street</i>	9
<i>Alamo Square Tour Map</i>	11
<i>864 Fulton Street</i>	12
<i>882 Grove Street</i>	13
<i>824 Grove Street</i>	14
<i>813 Grove Street</i>	15
<i>700 Hayes Street</i>	17
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	19
<i>Donors and Contributors</i>	20



## About the Victorian Alliance

The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco was organized in 1973 to promote preservation and restoration of historic buildings. Our members and guest speakers share information on preservation, history, architecture, and decorative arts at our monthly meetings as well as in our monthly bulletin. We also share helpful information on materials, techniques, contractors, and artisans with those wishing to restore their Victorian buildings. We lobby and testify on preservation issues at city and neighborhood meetings and reinforce our efforts with donations for neighborhood projects dealing with restoration and preservation. Most of our financial resources come from funds raised by Alliance activities such as house tours, garden tours, and garage sales. We are a volunteer organization with no paid staff, so almost all the funds we raise are available to support preservation and restoration projects. We also hold social functions such as our annual Holiday Party, which has become a celebrated tradition. We invite your participation at whatever level your interests and time permit. We meet the last Wednesday of each month, except for November and December. Please call (415) 824-2666 for the location of our next meeting or visit our website at [victorianalliance.org](http://victorianalliance.org) for more information.

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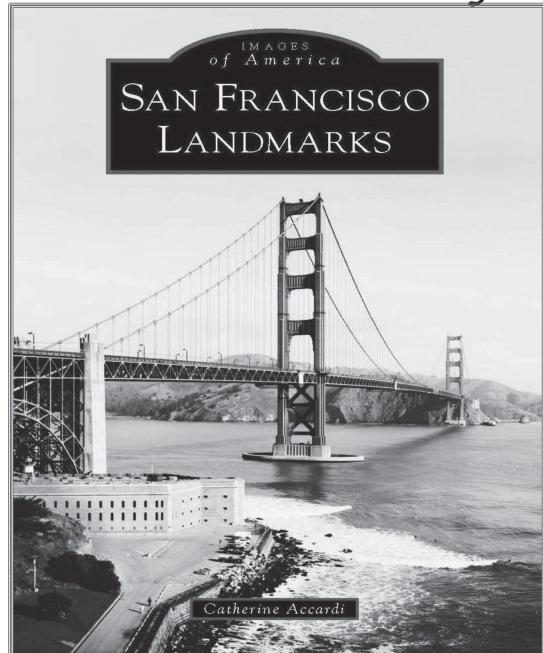


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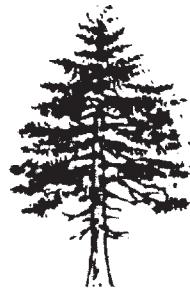


By Catherine Accardi  
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# Welcome from The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco

Dear Tour Guests,

Now more than ever, our goal of educating the public by showcasing the lovely interiors of fine Victorian homes is of the upmost importance. Every day an historic interior is unceremoniously destroyed and white boxes take the place of intricately carved woodwork and plaster moldings. While the shortsighted removal of these fine details ultimately serves no purpose other than to tear apart a floor plan from a previous era, it is undeniably the trend. I have always maintained that modern conveniences can complement original historic interiors without destroying the craftsmanship from years past. The homes on this year's tour illustrate this concept beautifully.

For our 43rd Annual House Tour, we are very proud to present The Storied Houses of Alamo Square. The wonderful, diverse, and creative interior designs you are about to see will surely impress, even if all are not to the taste of every viewer. These exuberant interiors represent decades of collecting, refining, customizing and, of course, loving these historic treasures. While touring these homes, see if you recognize three things that contribute to their viability in a modern age: 1) Staircase, mantelpiece, cornice moldings, stained glass windows, period lighting and wallpapers. Decidedly traditional in nature, they can be used as backdrops for modern furnishings and other details to great effect. 2) Note the clever use of built-in cabinetry and closets; some even include a handy sink. 3) Look at the variety of bathroom and kitchen designs, often painstakingly restored and enhanced to create a sense of history along with modern luxury.

Though instantly recognizable to San Francisco tourists, "Postcard Row" photos belie the importance of these structures in creating a sense of place. Most visitors only experience the façades of these residences. Our house tour welcomes you inside for an exclusive, intimate look at these beauties. As interiors enjoy no protections to speak of, we are thankful that a precious few structures in The City do have regulations in place to safeguard their exteriors. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of preserving these houses—both inside and out—for future generations.

Please enjoy your day touring these magnificent edifices and know that your participation directly contributes to our Historic Preservation Grant Program. Since our founding in 1973, over \$300,000 has been awarded to restore notable artifacts that grace our public parks, churches, and historic buildings.

Thank you to the volunteers who generously donate time and resources, and without whom the tour would not be possible. And our deepest appreciation is extended to our participating homeowners for their generous contribution in showcasing historic preservation at its very best!

Sincerely,



Roger K. Reid  
President  
The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco

## Alamo Square Neighborhood History

THE 2015 VICTORIAN Alliance House Tour takes place in San Francisco's beloved Alamo Square district. You will have the opportunity to view eight breathtaking examples of the City's Victorian architecture. The intricate detailing, loving care and restoration bestowed on the charming homes featured on today's house tour will delight you. The homes' architectural styles include Queen Anne, Italianate, Stick, and Gothic Revival, several with a unique mix of different styles. Houses featured on the tour include three residences on Grove Street, the Aigeltinger, Brune Reutlinger, and Mitchell houses; two residences on Hayes, the Fisk and Wilton houses; two buildings on Fulton, the Old Cathedral of the Holy Virgin and the Westerfeld House; and one residence on Steiner, the James Frank Moroney House.

Today's tour is fittingly centered around Alamo Square park, the quintessential urban green flanked by celebrated rows of Queen Anne homes in the heart of the district. Most of the homes date from the late 1870s through 1930, architect-designed for affluent downtown merchants. The neighborhood is well known for its dense concentration of intact Victorian and Edwardian-era structures exemplified by the iconic "Postcard Row" often featured in photographs, movies, and commercials.

The area began, as did much of San Francisco, as a wind-swept, unfriendly and rocky serpentine hill interspersed with sand dunes. Historic accounts indicate one lonely tree stood on Alamo Hill, alongside a watering hole that served the horseback trail from Mission Dolores to the Presidio. Alamo means poplar tree in Spanish and the watering hole was an outcome of the many underground springs trickling just below the surface, eight of which still exist in the park resulting in tufts of greener grass and patches of wet, spongy areas. It was in 1856 that James Van Ness set aside 12.7 acres as a city park, naming it Alamo Square and it was in 1857 that the City officially established the park. The Square's history is a bit less elegant than the glorious Victorian residences that surround it today, residences that you will have the rare opportunity to explore.

Rich in quintessentially San Francisco history, the Square provided temporary quarters for 1906 earthquake refugees. Images of the fire ranging all around the city are forlorn reminders of the catastrophic disaster than befell the area, an area that has clearly made an amazing return to glory. On your walkabout today note that despite several decades of hard times in the past, there are a striking number of fine examples of Victorian architecture still lining the streets.

The San Francisco Parks Alliance, (<http://www.sfparksalliance.org>), recounts the history of Alamo Square this way:

*In 1892, the city began grading and landscaping the rocky hill, laying out the curving pathways, and constructing stairways and a masonry wall. Merchant businessmen, lawyers, doctors and teachers flocked in, hired architects and built homes. Among them was Matthew Kavanagh's endlessly-reproduced row of Queen Anne houses, the Painted Ladies.*

*By the early 1920s, apartment buildings began to replace the large corner mansions once housing original pioneer families who later moved to newer neighborhoods. In the 1950s the beautiful park slid into two decades of deterioration. Homeowners moved away and sold their Victorians to entrepreneurs who divided them into multiple-bedroom rooming houses, many illegal and substandard. Some became halfway houses, drug rehab centers, or boarding houses for hippies. Displaced residents seeking housing flooded in when the Redevelopment Agency demolished large sections of the Western Addition. Safety in the park became a serious issue.*

The Alamo Square Neighborhood Association (ASNA) was founded in the early 1960s when a group of concerned neighbors banded together to fight the City's plan to slice off the crest of the hill, level it for playing fields and construct a large field house. Over subsequent decades, conditions improved thanks to the energetic efforts of a few key ASNA homeowners. Alamo Square's 12 blocks was designated a Historic District in July 1984 by San Francisco City Planning Commission Resolution 9962. The District is bounded by Golden Gate Avenue, Divisadero, Webster and Fell Streets.

The District achieved a historic designation because of its significant continuum of distinguished residential architecture by illustrious architects spanning the period from the 1870s to the 1920s. The towered Westerfield House, the renowned "Postcard Row" with its background of the downtown skyline, and the neighboring streetscapes are as identified worldwide with San Francisco as the cable cars and Coit Tower. With a variety of architectural styles, the District is unified in its residential character, relatively small scale, construction type, materials (principally wood), intense ornamentation (especially at entry and cornice), and use of basements and retaining walls to adjust for hillside sites. Most of the original owner-residents were moderately successful businessmen. A higher than average number of houses were designed by architects, including a virtual cross-section of the City's better professionals.

The present day neighborhood reflects the type of demographics typical of communities affected by gentrification. Such characteristics include a high number of younger people and upper-middle-class homeowners, along with a diverse older population. Divisadero Street divides Alamo Square from the North Panhandle and is the location of several small businesses, trendy restaurants and bars catering to a younger,

professional clientele. All in all, the local residents contribute to the booming local economy and are residents that value and enjoy Alamo Square's favorable weather and hospitable ambiance. Specifically recognized buildings within the Alamo Square Historic District include the Archbishop's Mansion, Green Apothecary, Russian Orthodox Church, and Westerfeld House.

Today, as you enjoy the 2015 Victorian Alliance House Tour, keep this neighborhood history in mind. Pause in Alamo Square and take a moment to reflect beyond the present day to days past. History is constantly in the making and you are part of it.

*—Neighborhood history prepared by Catherine Accardi, August 29, 2015*

Sources:

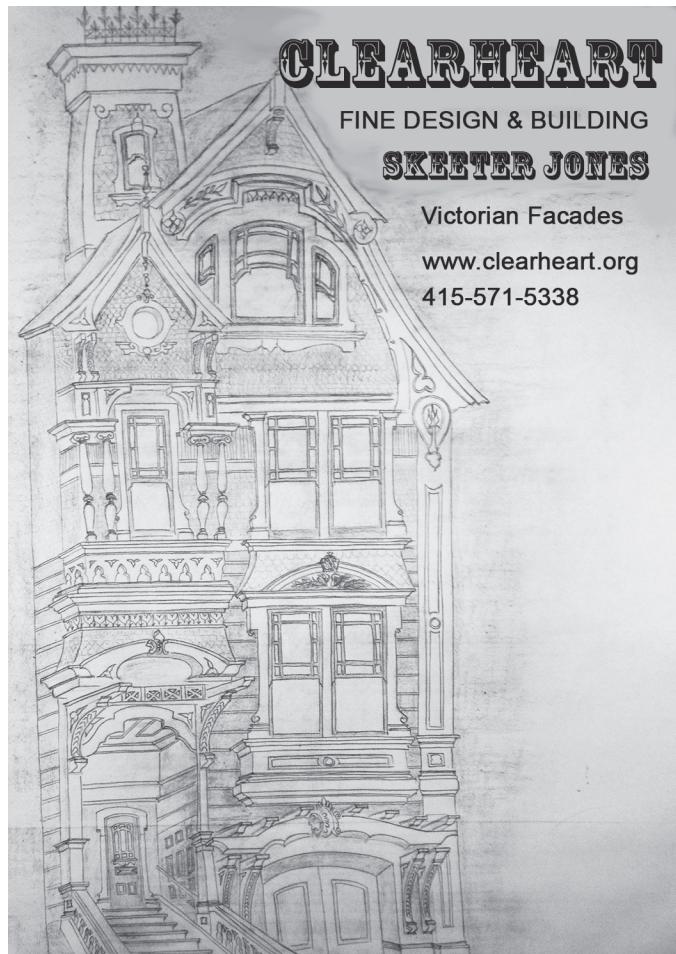
*Alamo Square Historic District* by Anne Bloomfield for the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, January 18, 1984

*The Storied Houses of Alamo Square* by Joseph B. Pecora

*History of Alamo Square Park* by Jeanne Alexander

Neighborhood Parks Council Report 42, Fall 2007

San Francisco Parks Alliance (<http://www.sfparksalliance.org/our-parks/parks/alamo-square>)



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# 1198 Fulton Street

## THE WESTERFELD HOUSE

**O**N SEPTEMBER 29, 1889, in a column headed "A Highly Favored and Rapidly Improving District," an *Examiner* critic noted that "Among the newest residences in the district is the beautiful mansion, just completed for William Westerfeld, the Market Street caterer, which, with its pure white walls and lofty towers, is a striking object in the landscape, standing as it does upon an elevated site on the northeast corner of Fulton and Scott Streets, just opposite Alamo Square." Over the 126 years since that first profile, this remarkably ornate Stick style, twenty-six room house has become one of the most frequently reviewed, often photographed and best loved Victorians in the City. Designed by German-born architect Henry Geilfuss 1198 Fulton Street was completed in 1889 at a cost of \$9,985.

William Westerfeld, 1198's first owner, came from Germany to San Francisco at age 16 via the Isthmus. A leading member of the large local German community, he learned his trade as an apprentice in his uncle Louis's Kearny Street bakery before joining Gustave Page to open a Market Street confectionery. In the 1880s he established his own bakery and restaurant at 1035 Market Street. William, his wife Pauline, a native of Hanover, and their four children Otto, Paul, Ella and Walla lived at a number of other Western Addition addresses before the move to their big house on the Square. Despite the substantial estate William left when he died in 1895 at age 52, his family could ill afford the maintenance costs of 1198 and relocated that same year to 1118 Turk Street. Irish-born contractor Jonathan (John) J. Mahony (1842-1918) bought 1198 from the Westerfelds for his family, who then resided there from the mid 1890s to the late 1920s. The Mahony household, in addition to John and his wife Mary, included four children, an Irish servant, and a Japanese cook. John widened the Westerfeld House's main hallway, redecorated it in the latest finishes, such as its high oak dado, installed a garage and, in 1902, sold the old rose and palm garden on the east side for residential development. By 1920 only two Mahony daughters, Ellen (Nellie) and Mary, and their two maiden aunts, Catherine and Margaret Curry, remained at 1198, and in 1928 they sold it to Clarence Herman, a neighboring property owner. In the 1930s a group of Russian émigrés operated the

house as a private club. Among those living at 1198 from the late 1950s into the early 60s were several African-American jazz musicians including John Handy Sr. and Art Lewis, a drummer with the Monty Waters band. In 1966, when investment banker Charles Fracchia purchased the then neglected and moldering old house for \$43,000, it was home to a group of hippies. Mr. Fracchia, whose wife refused to move into 1198 because of the neighborhood's dangerous reputation, evicted the hippies to rent to Kenneth Anger, an underground filmmaker and friend of Satanist Anton LeVey. Anger brought to live in the house and star in his movies a young man named Bobby Beausoleil who later gained notoriety as a member of the infamous Manson family. By 1968 the majority of rooms had been crudely transformed into loft apartments and the elaborate gas lighting fixtures (which were stolen about that time) served as the sole source of heat. In 1968 French native Daniel Ducois, a hairdresser, and his partner, William Von Weiland, purchased the house for \$45,000 with plans for its restoration. When applying for a water hook up, they did so in the name of "The Imperial Russian Consulate," happy to perpetuate a long standing rumor that the house had once served this function. After restoration, the partners sold it in 1983 to Anne Warner who operated 1198 as the Warner Embassy Bed & Breakfast Inn. Present owner Jim Siegel acquired the residence in 1986 and has spent the last twenty-nine years renovating the building, including restoration of the original basement ballroom.



The upstairs first floor features fourteen foot ceilings, while the second and third floors, with six bedrooms each, have twelve foot and ten foot ceilings respectively. Jim Siegel has decorated most of the interiors with Renaissance Revival Style furnishings and Bradbury & Bradbury wall coverings. On the exterior he has, to great effect, retiled the roof and painted the house in dark earth tones.

The first floor public rooms to the left of the expansive hall include double parlors, the second of which has a built-in bookcase and a thirteen foot high walnut mantle piece, while the dining room to the rear features built-in cabinetry. Doorways are capped with crown moldings inset with bear head medallions. The fourth floor tower room, with its unparalleled city views, replicates a Victorian Turkish smoking room.

—Adapted by Gary Goss from "The Storied Houses of Alamo Square" by Joseph B. Pecora

# 1027 Hayes Street

## THE WILTON HOUSE

JOHN WILTON (1848-1894), a wholesale dairy products merchant from Ireland, had resided in a tiny now demolished cottage with his family at nearby 1013 Hayes. In 1891 he commissioned 1027 (originally numbered 1011) for their new home. The architect's identity remains unknown.

The Wilton family, which included John's wife Sarah, daughter Elizabeth, and sons George and Douglas, always shared their home with renters. By 1900, the Wilton residence sheltered three families for a total of twelve residents. After the Wilton family's departure in 1814, 1027 Hayes changed hands as often as two dozen times. By 1951 the residence had been divided into five units, with a small cottage added in the backyard.

In 1974, John Orishyn purchased the structure and began the process of renovation that several subsequent owners were to continue. Next came the Meekers in 1977, who eliminated three of the units in the main house and created the present kitchen.

In 1986, Ken Stoddard and his partner Gary Eisman bought 1027, followed by Kenneth and Pam Rau in 1989. Each owner added their own successive improvements. In 1997, the home was acquired by the current owners, Sue Valentine and her husband Bob Spjut.

A variant of the Queen Anne Style, 1027 Hayes' facade is distinctive for its false gabled and French capped roofline, the vintage stair railings and spindle work on the front porch, and the integral detailing that adjoins the cantilevered bay window. Inside is the traditional row-house arrangement of a side hallway and staircase to the second floor.

Both the entry and second floor stairwell have been recently refreshed with a restrained neutral paint scheme and a new Anaglypta wainscot throughout. The Lyncrusta frieze was added by a previous owner. On the left is a doorway opening into a library, which connects to the front parlor and a spacious dining room out the back. The front parlor features a mahogany fireplace mantle that the current owners rescued from a demolished Victorian cottage. Of interest are fine ceiling moldings and a vintage chandelier. The middle parlor, which the current owners transformed, features an ornate ceiling (designed by Paul Duchscherer), papered in colorful Bradbury & Bradbury papers.

The dining room retains its original fireplace mantle of yellow-green colored tiles, three of which are small panels detailed with playful cupids. The room is paneled with a wood wainscot and has a ceiling covered in embossed Anaglypta added by the owners. All of the public downstairs rooms can be closed off from each other by original pocket doors.

At the end of the downstairs entry hall is a small office adjoining the dining room, which possibly once connected to the kitchen

(and perhaps also incorporated a butler's pantry). The kitchen is now accessed only from the dining room, which opens to the garden.

An original coved skylight above the staircase features stained glass dating to the 1970s.

On the second level the bay window of the front master bedroom opens to the prized view of Alamo Square, backdropped by Postcard Row and the City beyond. The current owners added the master bath at the front of the house. Of the remaining three original bedrooms, one is located off the middle of the stair hall and another at the left rear is pleasantly illuminated by an angled bay window. The fourth bedroom, once part of a back apartment with its own outside entry, is reached through a recently recreated rear hallway. A new period-style bathroom and a laundry facility plus storage closets all adjoin the rear hall. The former second floor apartment now functions as a home office.

A charming and sunny rear garden now flourishes where once a poorly constructed rental unit took up most of the space. The recently created garden features a pergola-topped open sitting area across the back of the lot. An outside staircase connects the second floor rear rooms to the garden.

—Adapted by Paul Duchscherer from "The Storied Houses of Alamo Square" by Joseph B. Pecora



# 601 Steiner Street

## THE HENRY OHLHOFF HOUSE (AKA THE JAMES SCOBIE HOUSE)

**I**N 1891, SCOTTISH immigrant James Scobie, after accumulating his fortune as a railroad and stone masonry contractor, commissioned the American-born architect Charles Havens to build the turreted, multi-gabled Queen Anne style, five bedroom residence that stands at the elevated northwest corner of Steiner and Fell Streets.

Charles Havens (1849–1916), a native of Long Island, New York, served as official San Francisco City Architect in 1892. His former home at 1381 South Van Ness Avenue and the Flat Iron Building at 540–48 Market Street are both City Landmarks. In addition to the Ohlhoff House, Haven's other neighborhood work is found at 1463–65 McAllister Street and 925 Fulton Street.

Although twice married, James Scobie (1836–c. 1902) was childless. After his death, his second wife, Agnes, relocated to 874 Fell Street.

The next family to occupy 601 Steiner was headed by Nicholas Ohlandt (1839–1916), a native of Germany who arrived in California in 1857. He was 61 at the turn of the century and purchased 601 Steiner for his wife, Mathilda, their four adult children, one son-in-law, two grandchildren, and three servants. Though Nicholas died in 1916, the family remained until 1919.

In the early 1920s, new owners Constant and Lily Bronisco converted the house into a convalescent home. In 1923, they enlarged the original elevator to accommodate heavier loads, which required the addition of a tower for the machinery. By mid-century, the property was known as the Hillcrest Sanitarium.

In June 1958, its present owner, The Episcopal Church, took possession of 601 Steiner and the two neighboring buildings to the north to create a campus. They renamed 601 Steiner for the Reverend Jacob Henry Ohlhoff (1886–1957). Since then, the complex has served as a live-in substance abuse recovery residence for men ages 18 to 64. Holding outside jobs, Ohlhoff House residents participate in a six-month structured program. In the adjacent buildings, men and women benefit from a 30-day intensive program.

The Reverend Henry Ohlhoff, the house's namesake, served as an Episcopalian minister for forty years. Known as "the skid row priest," he worked with those down on their luck and provided a nursery for employed mothers. He directed the downtown Canon Kip Community House from 1915 to 1952, and at various times he was a chaplain at San Quentin, at St. Luke's Hospital, and rector of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin on Union Street.

The elaborate keyplate of the double oak entry doors of 601 sports a griffin motif, a design repeated on the interior hardware. Entry hall highlights are an original chandelier, stenciled coving, a mahogany staircase and both stained and painted glass windows. One of the latter portrays a biblical Ruth gleaning wheat in the fields of Boaz; the other, titled "Struck It Rich," represents a prospector who has just discovered gold.

The many colored fireplace tiles depict classical motifs, medieval subjects, and scenes from nature. The first owner's godchildren are believed to be the children's faces on the hearth tiles in the front parlor. An expansive tile dado incorporating seashells and flower blossom motifs lines the walls of the vestibule bathroom.

Notice James Scobie's masonry work in the retaining wall that borders the property and in the cobblestone carriage drive to the rear.

—Adapted by Jason Allen-Rouman from *"The Storied Houses of Alamo Square"* by Joseph B. Pecora with updates from Arlene Stanich-Prince



# 710 Steiner Street

## THE JAMES FRANK MORONEY HOUSE

CARPENTER-BUILDER MATTHEW KAVANAUGH (1845–1912) immigrated to America from County Wexford, Ireland at age 24 and constructed the seven Queen Anne cottages—now commonly known as “Postcard Row”—on Steiner Street’s 700 block between 1892 to 1895. These then-tony townhouses are united by form, but remain individually unique in detailing. The Moroney House is distinctive for its elaborately ornate gable; shingled surfaces and spindle work; and the pattern of its jewel-encrusted stained glass windows.

Kavanaugh designed and built 722 Steiner first, just a few doors away, for use as his own residence, later erecting this house in 1894 for newlyweds James Frank and Anna Hunt Moroney.

James (1869–1919), the son of a prosperous Gold-Rush era stockbroker, worked for and then owned a succession of enterprises, ultimately serving as president of his own insurance firm, Moroney and Grant. His bride, Anna, was the daughter of Henry B. Hunt, who had arrived alone in San Francisco in 1849, at age 9, after losing his guardian-uncle to yellow fever in Panama. Anna, who was 19 when she married James, was described in one press release as “one of the most popular girls in the younger society set, as well as being acclaimed the most beautiful.” In 1909 Anna and James separated and moved.

In 1910, Mary Daly, then owner, let the house to various families until selling it in 1921. From 1923 to 1967 a series of owners made few changes to the home. Then, in 1967, Gregoire Calegari, a CPA, and his wife Cathy, an airline attendant, purchased 710 Steiner for \$32,000; they updated the house, including adding a back deck. Gregoire remembers these exciting years fighting the Redevelopment Agency’s plans to expand its renewal programs around Alamo Square.

Two more owners would safe-keep the Moroney House from 1974 to 2012 when the current couple, Gretchen Sisson and Andrew McCollum, purchased it on June 6, just three days before their wedding. Immediately they embarked on a massive two-year restoration and renovation. All systems, including the original sewer line, were replaced, and the home was earthquake retrofitted.

While replacing wiring, lincrusta—long hidden beneath drywall overlays—was discovered in the dining room, main stairwell, and master bedroom. Sections were painstakingly restored, while molds were cast to replicate the missing portions.

Besides the elegant updates to the kitchen and bathrooms, a bay window was added to the kitchen and bedroom above; a bed and bath inserted on the lowest level; and a full bath, and outside balcony to the uppermost level.

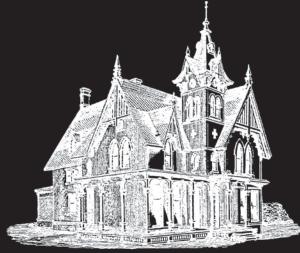
The house maintains many original features, including the first-floor fireplace mantles, tiles, ceiling medallions, chandeliers, figural brackets, pocket doors, and dining room floor parquet frieze in a Greek key motif. The matching stained glass windows on the front of the house, as well as the one at the top of the stairs, were first installed in 1894, but fully restored. Notice sections of early wallpaper, either preserved and featured in place or in framed sections, throughout the house.

Butler Armsden Architects led the project with the work completed by Scott and Warner Construction.

Postcard Row has been featured in films and television shows, including *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978), *Bicentennial Man* (1999), *Five Year Engagement* (2012), and, most famously, in the opening credits of *Full House* (1987–1995).

—Adapted by Jason Allen-Rouman from “The Storied Houses of Alamo Square” by Joseph B. Pecora with updates from Gretchen Sisson and Andrew McCollum





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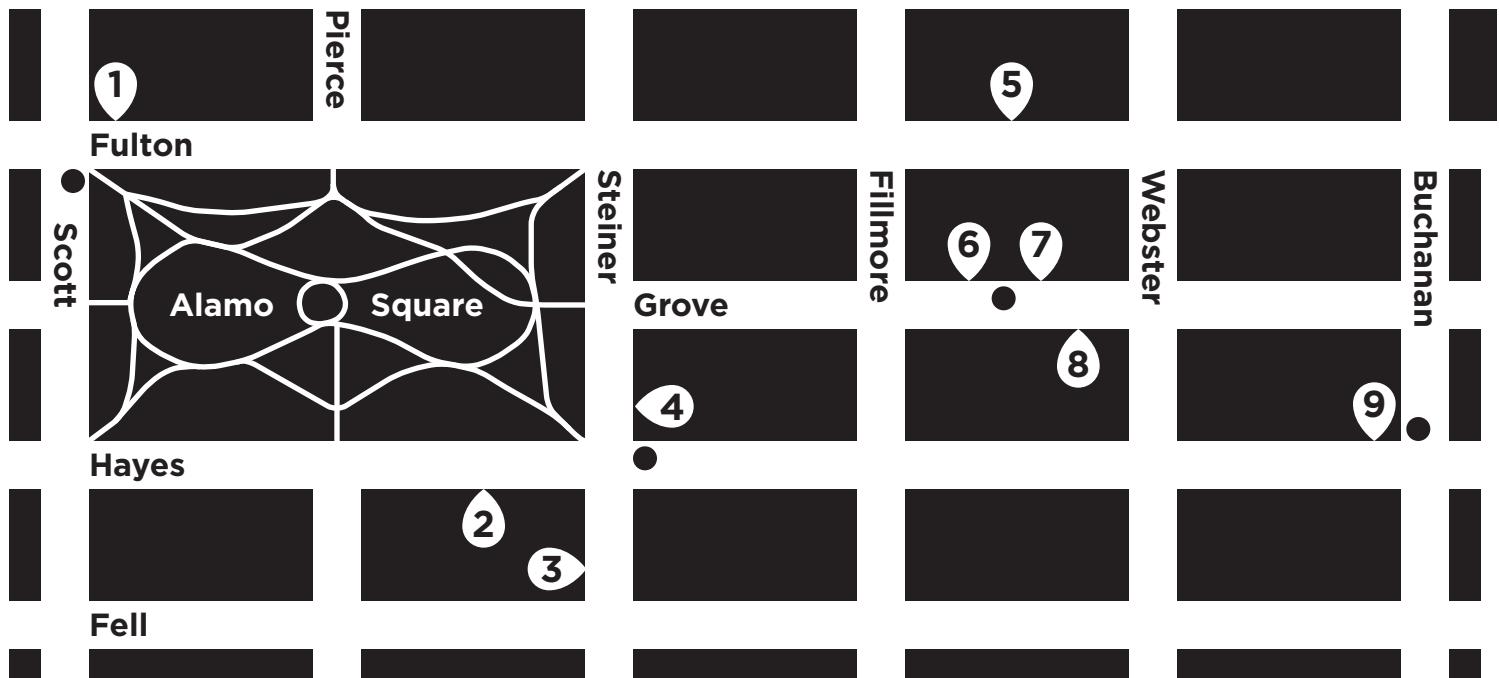
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# ALAMO SQUARE TOUR MAP



● Indicates a cable car bus stop for tour patrons.

This is a self-guided tour. You may visit the homes in any order you wish.

1. 1198 Fulton Street
2. 1027 Hayes Street
3. 601 Steiner Street
4. 710 Steiner Street
5. 864 Grove Street
6. 882 Grove Street
7. 824 Grove Street
8. 813 Grove Street
9. 700 Hayes Street

Please note that some houses will require provided shoe coverings.

**No photography** is allowed while inside the homes.

Please no pets, but registered service animals are welcome.

Light refreshments will be served from 2:00 to 4:30 pm at 864 Fulton.

Restrooms will be available during tour hours at:

- The center of Alamo Square Park
- Hayes Valley Playground (Hayes and Buchanan)
- 1198 Fulton and 864 Fulton (ask a docent)
- 824 Grove and 882 Grove (ask a docent)

# 864 Fulton Street

## THE OLD CATHEDRAL OF THE HOLY VIRGIN (FORMERLY ST. STEPHAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH)

**T**HE OLD CATHEDRAL of the Holy Virgin is an active, though currently small, Russian Orthodox community. The building, erected in 1875 for a then burgeoning Western Addition, was known as St. Stephan's Episcopal Church.

Designed by architects Wright and Sanders, the Episcopal community, headed by Reverend Lion, purchased the site at 864 Fulton and, the next year, erected the towered structure attached to the rear of the present church as their temporary chapel. Families of the original congregation, such as the Chalmers, Woosters, Menzies, Quakenbushes, and the Jonathan Hinkels (of the well known contractor-builder family) donated the individual stained glass panels on either side of the nave.

In 1930, a large Russian Orthodox community, which fled Russia via China during the 1917–1919 Bolshevik Revolution and later settled in the northwestern area of the Western Addition, purchased St. Stephan's. There was a time in 1950s when services at the little cathedral were so packed that it was hard to move. But since 1961, when the congregation built the new, multi-domed Holy Virgin Cathedral at 6210 Geary, the number of parishioners attending the Fulton Street church, now headed by the Very Reverend Archimandrite Anastassy, has plummeted to fewer than twenty families.

Designated City Landmark No. 28 by the Board of Supervisors in 1969, its formal title is the Old Cathedral of the Holy Virgin, Joy of All Who Sorrow, Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

The signal Gothic features of 864 Fulton's vertically arranged exterior include steeply pitched rooflines, sharply peaked window forms, and tall, narrow stained glass panels. Current symbols of its Eastern Orthodox community are the gilded crosses surmounting the front facing gable and the portico's icon which replaced the old St. Stephan's marker. The church's plaster façade, applied in the 1930s, covers original wood cladding and vertical panels in the Stick style.

Aside from the removal of its pews, the handsome redwood interior is largely intact. Reflecting Russian Orthodox tastes, it is far more ornate than that of its Episcopal predecessor. In front of the altar is an elaborate screen, or iconostasis, crafted to complement the church's Gothic character. Above icon-filled lower walls, tall stained glass double windows, in rows of six, colorfully illuminate the nave. The floor is oak while the arched beams overhead are redwood. In his monograph of the architect, *John Wright (1830–1915): Grandfather of West Coast Architecture*, Norman J. Ronneberg wrote, "The vaulted redwood ceiling of St. Stephan's is evocative of a sailing ship's wooden hull, with exposed ribs and trusses swelling to the roof line." Founding members of the Russian church brought the large chandelier hanging near the altar with them when they emigrated from the Chinese city of Harbin in the 1920s.

Architect John Wright was born in Scotland. He immigrated to Canada in his teens, studied, and first practiced before forming a partnership with George Sanders. In the 1860s, the firm relocated to the Bay Area and designed over 100 buildings, the bulk of which were destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire. Among the survivors, in addition to 864 Fulton, are the San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, the State Mental Hospital at Napa, the Berkeley School for the Deaf, and St. James Episcopal Church in Oakland.

—Adapted by Jason Allen-Rouman from "The Storied Houses of Alamo Square" by Joseph B. Pecora with updates from V. Abbot Rev. James Corazza



# 882 Grove Street

## THE AIGELTINGER HOUSE

**W**HEN THE WIDOWED Caroline F. Aigeltinger of 890 Grove Street commissioned contractor Hugh Keenan in 1893 to construct the Queen Anne tower house in her side garden, she was tapping one of the few economic resources available in the nineteenth century for those who were in strained circumstances. Real estate was for her a vital safety net.

Mrs. Aigeltinger and her husband Leopold, migrants from Württemberg, Germany, arrived on Grove Street in 1882. They and Henry Froomberg, Leopold's partner in the furrier business, purchased from John D. Collins a 50 vara lot (137.5' x 137.5') for \$11,000 at the 800 block's west end. They subdivided the property between themselves, each receiving equal frontage on Grove. The Aigeltingers settled into the Collins' former two-story gabled dwelling (erected in 1865), while Henry Froomberg constructed two sets of rental flats on his half of the property.



Caroline was widowed four years later and sometime after building 882 she sold her property to James West, a prominent grocer.

A socially well-connected family, headed by Henri Pierre Tricou rented 882 Grove in 1905. Henri, who arrived here from Louisiana in the early 1850s, worked most of his life as a notary public. His wife Mary and their four sons, Harry, Eugene, Lucien and Frank De Bayou, resided at the Aigeltinger House until the early 1920s. The James West family retained possession of 882 Grove into the 1940s when it was purchased by the extended Stenberg family, who had resided there as renters since the early 1930s.

At one time the house hosted seven members of the three-generation Stenberg clan plus four boarders. The parlors were partitioned to serve as bedrooms and the two children, Bill and Jayne, slept in the attic. The senior Stenbergs, Olie and Minnie, were from Norway and Minnesota, respectively.

Jayne (1923–2011), along with her brother Bill and other family members, revisited 882 Grove in 2005. Reminiscing about life in the house, Jayne recalled that when very young, she had tumbled over the attic level banister on the third floor and plunged toward the hallway floor on the first. Fortunately, one of her aunts was walking the hall corridor at that very moment, heard a noise, looked up and caught Jayne in her arms.

In the late 1970s, a band of saffron-robed Caucasian Buddhists from Texas, incorporated as the Chakpoori Ling Association, purchased the property for \$40,000 and taught and practiced acupuncture in the house's dining room. The present owner, Joseph B. Pecora, a native of Los Angeles, purchased the Aigeltinger residence in 1979.

A restrained example of a Queen Anne townhouse, 882 Grove has two stories, a basement, and attic. Among the design elements characteristic of its style are a corner tower, stained glass window panels, front gabled roofline, dentil trim and simple door and window treatments.

A small art glass panel in a side window, the only one of four to escape a theft sometime in the early 1970s, served as a model to replicate those of the front parlor. The third floor's main bath features its original oak-trimmed, claw-foot tub. There are four bedrooms on this level and a fifth in the attic.

The contractor, Hugh Cornelius Keenan, 882's Irish-born contractor, resided in the Western Addition and often practiced with Robert Cranston, one of the City's most prominent early builders.

—Adapted from *"The Storied Houses of Alamo Square"* by Joseph B. Pecora

# 824 Grove Street

## THE BRUNE-REUTLINGER HOUSE

THE WESTERN ADDITION house that well-to-do liquor merchant Henry Brune built 129 years ago at 824 Grove Street has survived to become one of the country's most celebrated Victorian dwellings—a time capsule of period furnishing and ornament. Designed by architect Henry Geilfuss and featuring both Italianate and Stick style elements, the Brune-Reutlinger House was constructed in 1886 at a cost of \$7,500.

The Henry Brunes, 824 Grove's first family, resided there twenty years until shortly after the 1906 earthquake, and their successors, the William J. Gallaghers, a large Irish-American Catholic family, lived there for the next forty-five. From 1952 to 1964, 824 housed the Antioch Baptist Church; its present owner acquired the property in 1965.



In 1863, Henry Brune, a native of Wiesbaden, Germany, immigrated to the U.S. at age 15. In 1871, he and Frederick Koster ran the Central Saloon on the northwest corner of Kearny and Geary. Eight years later, in partnership with William Alfs and Henry Nabers, he established a liquor wholesale and import firm, which touted itself on the concern's business card as the sole local agents of Phoenix Old Bourbon Whiskey. Henry and his first wife, the former Emilie Mohr of Sacramento, along with their three children moved to Grove Street from a previous residence at 101 Capp Street in the Mission. Emilie enjoyed only four years in her new home, for in 1890, at age 31, she died while traveling in Europe. In 1892 the widowed Henry married Louise (LuLu) Von Ortendorff and fathered an additional three children. The Brunes, listed in the *San Francisco Blue Book*, entertained guests in their large downstairs ballroom, which doubled as a playroom for their six children.

In 1907 the Brunes relocated to Ross in Marin County and sold 824 to William J. Gallagher, proprietor of the Woodlawn Stables located two blocks away at 617-33 Grove. Mr. Gallagher, a native San Franciscan born of Irish immigrant parents, had apprenticed as a carriage maker at age 17, worked as a blacksmith at 20, and in 1891 joined with his father Patrick to form the wood and coal firm of P.J. Gallagher & Son on the northeast corner of Hayes and Buchanan Streets. William expanded his operations to include his livery stable in 1898. Keeping pace with the changing times, William's stables evolved into Gallagher Automotive and then Town Taxi, a forerunner of the Yellow Cab Company. The Gallagher household in 1910 included William, his wife Mary, five children and one domestic, Pauline Mahler.

After the sale in 1952 to the Antioch Baptist Church, the ballroom was converted into a chapel and plans were proposed to remove 824's elaborate Victorian façade and combine the two lower levels into a single large meeting hall. Daunted by neighborhood opposition, the

church sold the property in 1964 to Elizabeth Heller, a member of the Wells Fargo banking family. Although she had planned to restore the house, which she had been using as a rental, she changed her mind and put the house back on the market.

The next owner and present occupant is Richard Reutlinger, who found his new home

— (Continued on Page 16)

# 813 Grove Street

## THE MITCHELL HOUSE

THE ITALIANATE RESIDENCE at 813 Grove Street was constructed in 1871 for insurance broker John C. Mitchell and is the oldest of all the vintage houses erected on this tree-lined block. San Francisco Planning Department records indicate the builder was contractor and plasterer, David Mulrein. Antedating the Mitchell House on its 100' x 40' lot was a small one-story cottage, once valued at \$1,000 and inhabited from 1868 by David Mulrein and his wife Mary. In 1871 the Mulreins sold the property for \$3,000 to watchmaker Julius Wallman, who transferred it as a gift to Elizabeth Mitchell.

Arriving on the Pacific coast from Massachusetts about 1853, the Mitchell family resided at 104 Eighth Street before relocating to the Western Addition. According to the 1870 census, their household consisted of John; his wife Elizabeth; their four children and John's younger brother, George, age 35, a carpet dealer.

Shortly after the turn of the century, after John C. Mitchell died, George Marion and his wife Eleanor, who had married in 1885, inherited the house. Socially active, they were listed until 1914 in the *San Francisco Blue Book*, the social register of the day. Keeping Eleanor company, was her widowed aunt,

Frances A. Porter, who resided at 813 for over thirty years. After seventy-one years, the Mitchell family's ownership ended in 1942 when George Marion's widowed and childless second wife Lucy sold the home.

Later, long-term owners included Stella Rogoway in the 1940s and Joseph Filipelli in the mid-1960s. Dr. Thomas Waddell (1937-87), organizer of the Gay Games, held the property briefly before selling it in 1973 to its current owner, Philip Strauss, a retired lawyer from the office of the San Francisco District Attorney.

The exterior ornamentation of 813 Grove includes corner blocks (quoins), bracketed eaves, slanted bays, arched windows flanked by colonettes, and paired front doors inset with panes of brilliantly hued stained glass. The porch balustrade was restored in 1996. Permit records state that the garage, or carriage house, was built in 1917 for \$3,500.

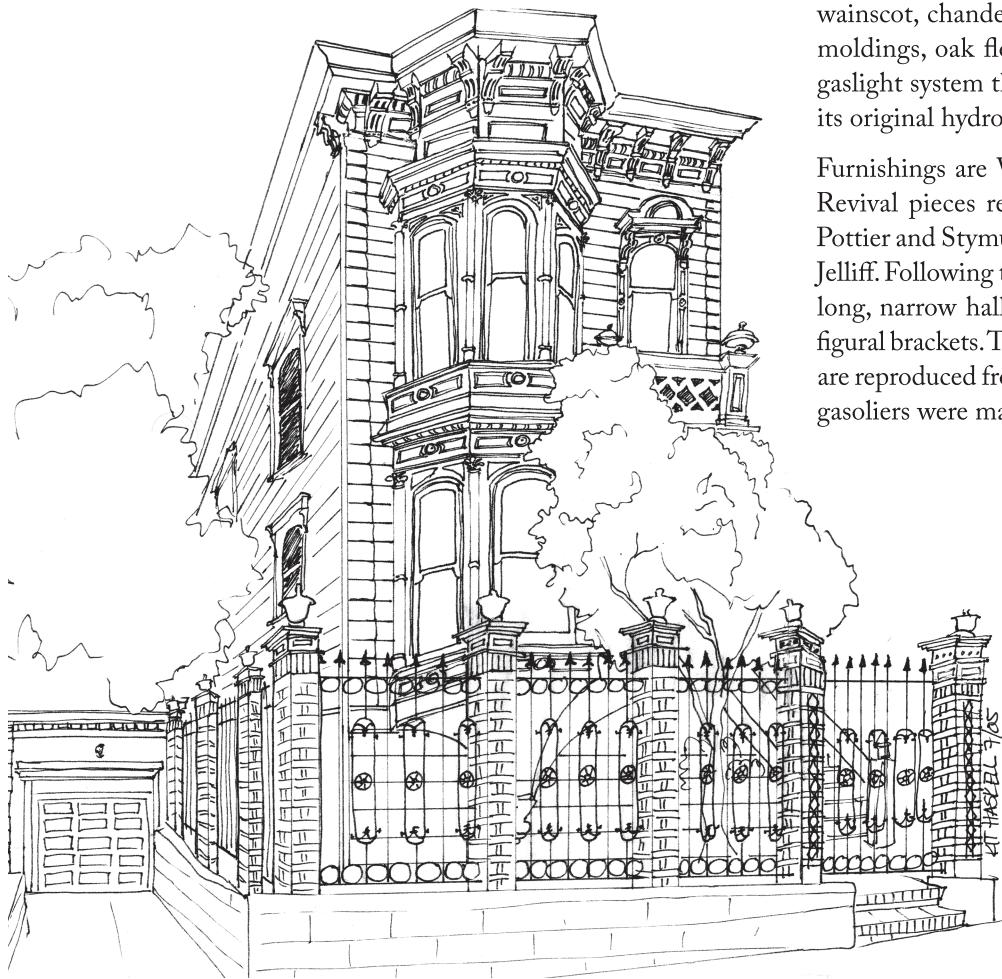
In 2004, 813's wall of ivy-covered wooden fence was demolished to be replaced by a stately Victorian-inspired wrought iron fence with elaborate brick posts and concrete urns. Below this stands a new rusticated stone retaining wall similar to those fronting other nineteenth century neighborhood dwellings.

According to testimony given decades ago by an elderly former neighbor, Michael Nicholson, 813 Grove suffered an attic fire. Despite fire and multiple ownership, many vintage interior features remain. Among them are Lincrusta-Walton wainscot, chandeliers and sconces made in the 1870s, ceiling moldings, oak flooring, a mahogany staircase, and an intact gaslight system throughout the house. The house is heated by its original hydronic radiators.

Furnishings are Victorian, with an emphasis on Renaissance Revival pieces representing manufacturers Herter Brothers, Pottier and Stymus, Thomas Brooks, Alexander Roux and John Jelliff. Following traditional floor plans of the 1870s, 813 Grove's long, narrow hallway opens first to two parlors separated by figural brackets. The large ceiling medallions here and elsewhere are reproduced from neighborhood examples. The two working gasoliers were made in the 1870s by the Cornelius Company.

Beyond the parlors, and accessible only from the hall, is an intimately scaled but elaborately decorated formal dining room. Wallpapers from Bradbury & Bradbury's neoclassical room set in a Pompeian color scheme are hung to the designs of interior decorator Paul Duchscherer. Vintage embellishments include a ceiling of wood and Lincrusta-Walton, a dado paneled in walnut grained redwood, and an oak floor with inlaid borders. Showcased is a grand Eastlake sideboard of American manufacture.

(Continued on Page 16)



in severely dilapidated condition and has been restoring, renovating, decorating and furnishing 824 for fifty years. His efforts, which have been illustrated in a number of national publications, so impressed a former publisher of the *Old House Journal*, that the latter declared 824 Grove to be “the most famous Victorian home in America.”

Each of the house’s dozen or so rooms is finished in the style of the 1880s. The spacious fifteen-foot high parlors on the first floor, completely redecorated in 1994 by members of Artistic License, a local guild of artisans, lead into a dining room which features built-in floor-to-ceiling walnut cabinetry. Also on this floor are a conservatory, a morning room and a large kitchen with two vintage stoves. The second floor has five bedrooms, the first of which is decorated with ornate stenciling by artisan Larry Boyce while the others are hung with Bradbury & Bradbury wallpapers designs by Paul Duchscherer. The rear bedchamber has been transformed into an extravagantly ornate Turkish room.

The ballroom is now a music hall, stocked with music boxes and player pianos of all kinds, including a Foto Player which was used in movie houses of the silent film era. In addition to playing piano rolls, it can produce, when operated manually, an array of vintage audio effects: horns, whistles, drums, hoof-beats, pistol shots and castanets.

Mr. Reutlinger first furnished his home by attending Butterfield auctions and by shopping at the many second hand stores lining a nearby commercial strip on McAllister Street that dealt in nineteenth century furnishings and ornament. In the early 1970s, these stores were vacated so that the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency could complete its second phase of Western Addition demolition which eliminated hundreds of Victorian structures between Geary and Fulton Streets. Were it not for community resistance, the agency would have continued its “renewal” as far south as Market Street, and homes such as the Brune-Reutlinger house would have been lost.

In 1991, Marion Brune, Henry Brune’s niece, celebrated her 85th birthday at 824 Grove. So touched was she by her host’s fascination with his house’s history that she declared him to be “a gentleman of sentiment.”

—Adapted by Gary Goss from “The Storied Houses of Alamo Square” by Joseph B. Pecora

The March 2004 issue of *Old House Interiors* profiled the striking remodel and expansion of the former 1950s style kitchen at the end of the hall. Incorporating period design elements such as tile flooring, pressed tin ceiling, and detailed wooden cabinetry in soothing shades of green, it also includes granite countertops and the most up-to-date utilities. To the rear of the kitchen is the remodeled servant’s quarters.

At the base of the front stairway near the entry is a figural gas-lit newel lamp. The painting in the lower front hall area, in silver, gold and copper, representing the three California ores, is the work of Larry Boyce, an accomplished artisan and stenciler practicing in the 1980s, who resided briefly at 813 Grove. Directly above, on the stair landing is a “coffin corner” niche, typically found in local Italianates.

Upstairs on the second floor are three bedrooms, two and a half baths, and a solarium. The two front bedrooms have been papered in Bradbury & Bradbury papers, to the design of Paul Duchscherer. Connecting these two chambers is a full bath lined with an older green faux marble wainscot. The tile floor was recently installed by a Florentine artisan.

Down the hall is a spacious library and study containing another set of chandeliers installed by the Mitchells and a fine bookcase purchased by the current owner at auction in Massachusetts. The intricately laid mosaic tile floor of the sunroom at the rear of the house replicates the pattern found in the tile flooring of San Francisco’s historic Ninth Circuit Court House at Seventh and Mission Streets.

Outdoors, a spacious veranda, designed by local craftsman Erick Kramvik, opens to a side yard planted in poplar trees.

—Adapted by Catherine Accardi from “The Storied Houses of Alamo Square” by Joseph B. Pecora with updates from Philip Strauss

# 700 Hayes Street

## THE FISK HOUSE

**T**HIS ARCHITECTURALLY ECLECTIC mansard roofed and domed tower house on the corner of Hayes and Buchanan has drawn admiring glances for over 130 years.

Commissioned in 1884 by Asa Fisk, a New England-born moneylender, the residence, built to the plans of architect Edward Hatherton, along with a two-story stable, was erected for \$20,000. Originally placed on the uphill lot to its left, the house was relocated to its present site by Lydia Fisk, Asa's wife, in 1899. On the vacated site, Lydia constructed a three flat building numbered 710-714 that she used for rental income.

The Fisks started a tradition of staying in the home for roughly 30 years, which each subsequent owner has followed. The Fisks raised two children during their initial stewardship. When their daughter Florence created a scandal by eloping with a Jewish cigar merchant, she was disowned until her brother, Arthur, fell in love with his brother-in-law's sister and married her. Parents, both married children, and their spouses and grandchildren resided together until 1916.

In that year, the new owners of the Asa Fisk House were Victor Duhem, a photographer, and his wife, Julia. Victor and his sons, Charles and Raymond, were pioneers in California's filmmaking industry, forming the Duhem Motion Picture Company in 1912. Briefly named the Frisco Film Company, it first operated out of Victor's former residence at 652 Oak Street until it was moved to 700 Hayes.

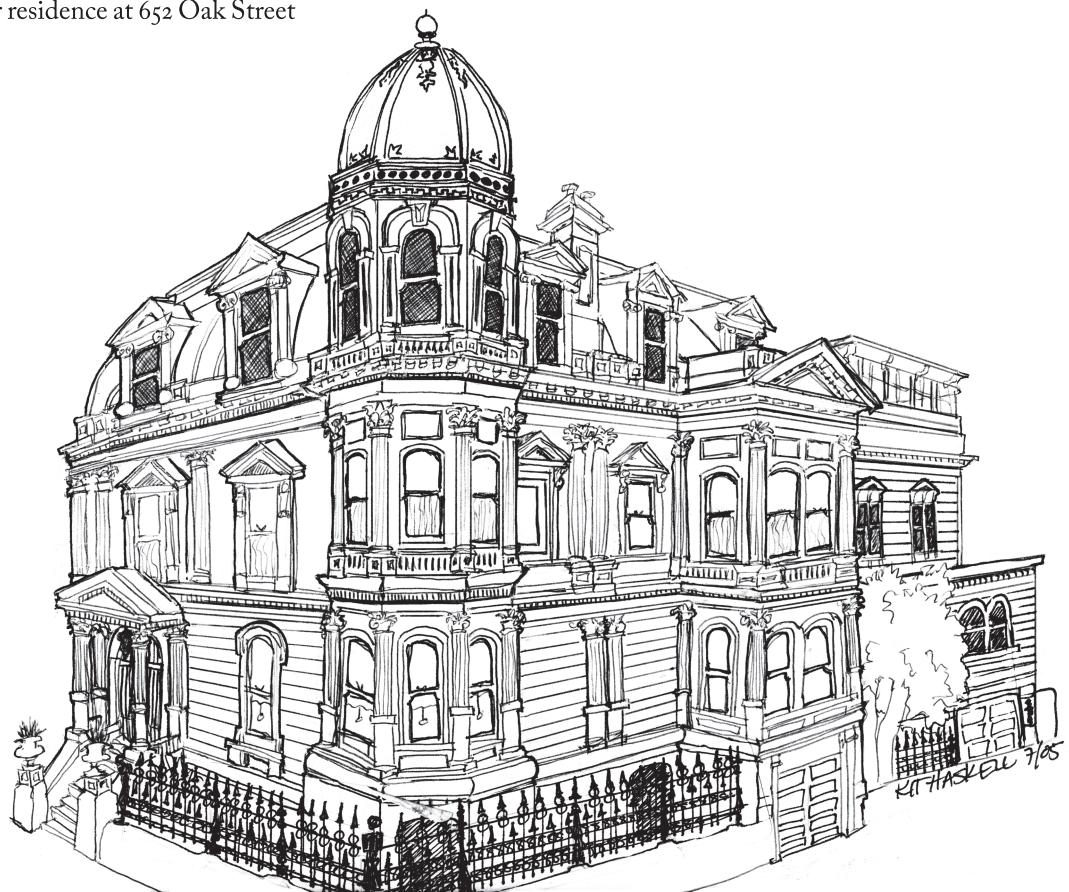
Victor and Julia Duhem's daughter, Elaine Duhem Klien, eventually took over the house and remained until 1958; often, she used the large parlor and attic ballroom for concerts and other cultural events. Selling to James and Opel McClemore in 1972, the house remained an active place with 13 other family members sharing the three floors. The McClemores sold the house in 1972 to the Chan family, and the Chans raised three daughters here. In 2003, current owners, Gail Baugh and Jim Warshell, purchased the Fisk House and began a labor of love to restore the home to its current splendor.

Reinvigorating the otherwise unimproved house involved a variety of tasks. These included extensive woodwork refinishing, decorative plaster repair, upgrading the foundation, and rebuilding twenty of the eighty redwood windows. The more obvious changes include a period appropriate kitchen update; rich, saturated room colors; and authentic gas and electric lighting.

Interesting to note is the tall mahogany door at the back of the entry hall that once opened to the west garden and is embellished with the overlapping initials of A.F. for the original owner. (Remember, this house was moved from the lot to the west!)

The house is notable for its unique combination of stylistic elements. It has a Second Empire mansard roof, Italianate body, classical columns and a Queen Anne domed tower. Spacious and airy with fourteen foot ceilings on the first and second floors, the house has eight fireplaces with beautiful Minton and American art tile surrounds. Rare Cuban mahogany is used lavishly throughout the interior. The top floor has a ballroom, roof garden, and conservatory. Ascend the main staircase to see all three areas and take time to enjoy the cityscape views of City Hall, Nob Hill, and the Transamerica Pyramid.

—Adapted by Jason Allen-Rouman from *"The Storied Houses of Alamo Square"* by Joseph B. Pecora with additions by Jim Warshell and Gail Baugh





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FOUNDED IN 1973

*Did you enjoy this year's tour? We invite you to discover  
historic architecture in San Francisco year-round.*

The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco was organized in 1973 to promote preservation and restoration of historic buildings. Our members and guest speakers share information on preservation, history, architecture, and decorative arts at our monthly meetings as well as in our monthly bulletin. We also share helpful information on materials, techniques, contractors, and artisans with those wishing to restore their Victorian buildings. We lobby and testify on preservation issues at city and neighborhood meetings and reinforce our efforts with donations for neighborhood projects dealing with restoration and preservation. Most of our financial resources come from funds raised by Alliance activities such as house tours, garden tours, and garage sales. We are a volunteer organization with no paid staff, so almost all the funds we raise are available to support preservation and restoration projects. We also hold social functions such as our annual Holiday Party, which has become a celebrated tradition. We invite your participation at whatever level your interests and time permit. We meet the last Wednesday of each month, except for November and December. Please call (415) 824-2666 for the location of our next meeting or visit our website at [victorianalliance.org](http://victorianalliance.org) for more information.

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# Acknowledgements

The Victorian Alliance would like to express its gratitude to the homeowners, the administration of the Henry Ohlhoff House, and the Congregation of Old Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Russian Orthodox Church. Their generosity and community spirit have made this tour possible.

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**House Tour Co-Chairs:** Courtney Clarkson and Anne Young

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**Neighborhood Research:** Joseph B. Pecora, Catherine Accardi, Ray Zablotny, Stephen Haigh, Don Langley

**House History Research, Writing, Editing:** House Histories based on "The Storied Houses of Alamo Square" by Joseph B. Pecora, with editing by the author, Gary Goss, Jason Allen-Rouman, Paul Duchscherer, Catherine Accardi, Kyle McGuire, Donald Beilke, Eileen Keremitsis

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**Music at Refreshment Center:** Guitarist Larry James, courtesy of Charlie Freas

**Appreciation Party:** Roger Reid, Anita Denz, Ron Symansky

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Thanks to Julia Strzesieski of Cole Valley Hardware for arranging a generous donation of wine for our Appreciation Party.

The Victorian Alliance is indebted to the following authors and artisans who have generously donated proceeds from their books and crafts for our Gift Shop sales at the Old Holy Virgin Church.

Stop by for refreshments and get a head start on your holiday shopping. Choose gifts from this attractive assortment of Victorian era books and merchandise.

- “The Storied Houses of Alamo Square,” first edition, signed by Joseph B. Pecora
- “Victorian Glory,” second edition, signed by Paul Duchscherer
- “In the Victorian Style” by Randolph Delehanty, unsigned
- Victorian houses imprinted T-shirts by artist Kit Haskell of Gingerbread; S, M, L, XL, XXL
- “Gables & Fables” note cards with house drawings by artist Kit Haskell of Gingerbread
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